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Saigon Sees Reprisal As Possible

Speculation As To Retaliatory Strike in North Grows

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Saigon, Vietnam, Wednesday, March 31 (AP) — Speculation increased today that the United States may strike directly at the Communist North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi in reprisal for the terrorist bombing of the United States Embassy. The toll from yesterday's blast rose to 20 dead and 175 wounded.

South Vietnamese troops marched in front of the United States Information Center today in a demonstration against the Communist Viet Cong. Light planes swept over Saigon dropping leaflets advertising the demonstration.

During the night 2 more Vietnamese died of wounds. That made the toll 2 Americans and 18 Vietnamese killed and 45 Americans and 130 Vietnamese wounded.

Security Tightened

Officials tightened security generally around Saigon in anticipation of possible new terrorism during the anti-Red rally. Embassy employees picked their way through the debris, trying to return to their workaday routine. Red China gloated over the embassy attack, calling the terrorism "heartening news to the revolutionary people throughout the world while the big and small chieftains in Washington are panic-stricken."

Seemingly anticipating new retaliatory attacks on the north, Peking's official *People's Daily*—quoted by Peking radio—said the United States "cannot escape fiasco no matter how many bombs it may dump. . . ."

The Peking Communist party newspaper called the embassy blast a "victory for the South Vietnamese people" and "a warning to the United States aggressors intend to remain in

South Vietnam there will be no place for them to hide even if they die."

U.S. Girl Dies

One of the American dead was a girl secretary of the embassy, Barbara A. Robbins, 21, of Denver.

The other victim was a United States Navy petty officer, whose identity was withheld until his family is notified.

Deputy Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson, himself slashed by flying glass, bitterly condemned his "example of the Viet Cong's readiness to resort to atrocities against civilians."

Among the American community in Saigon the mood was clearly for a heavy new retaliatory air strike against Communist North Vietnam.

"After our recent raids north, what else can we do for an encore?" asked the wife of a United States embassy worker.

Vietnamese soldiers and Government officials shared that opinion, telling Americans in effect: "Now you have no choice, you have to bomb Hanoi."

Ho Chi Minh's governmental stronghold has never been touched in raids so far by United States and South Vietnamese planes above the Seventeenth Parallel.

A 30-plane task force staged the fourteenth raid yesterday, but it was a previously planned operation to knock out a military air base near Dong Hoi, 260 miles south of Hanoi. Pilots said the targets were 90 per cent destroyed.

Bomb In Car

The Saigon explosion was set off in a black French Citroen sedan that a terrorist parked and abandoned in front of the five-story embassy building.

About 150 embassy workers and visitors were in the embassy. Dozens of other persons were strolling outside along the wide, tree-shaded Ham Nghi avenue, just before 11 A.M. yesterday.

Forty-five or more Americans and at least 104 Vietnamese and non-American foreigners were injured by the explosion and the rain of broken glass and other debris from the building.

Seven of the Americans—some from military missions and others from civilian agencies—received serious wounds requiring specialist

treatment—were flown to Clark Air Base in the Philippines.

The Vietnamese dead included the car driver, felled as he fled riding double on a motorcycle with a fellow terrorist, and several Vietnamese policemen on guard duty at the embassy.

The second terrorist, who packed a .45 pistol, was shot from the motorcycle and captured, seriously injured.

The explosion was heard for miles around. It blew the sedan into countless fragments, shattered every window and uprooted much of the furniture in the embassy. Nearby buildings also were heavily hit. The blast slashed a deep hole in the pavement of the avenue and mushroomed flames and smoke 300 feet into the air.

Deputy Ambassador Johnson, who was in charge in the absence of Ambassador Maxwell D. Taylor in Washington, emerged from his wrecked fifth floor office with his face slashed by glass and blood dripping on his shirt collar.

Praises Staff

He said, however, the Americans are not intimidated. He praised the reaction of the embassy staff, American and Vietnamese, in helping the wounded throughout the crisis.

Premier Phan Hui Quat declared "This Viet Cong terrorism, this savagery, was not an act of war but an act of murder."

"We Vietnamese of free Vietnam will not rest in peace until justice is done to the murderers," he said. "And justice will be done."

There was an odd unanimity in the Communist sphere's view of the incident. Radio stations and newspapers of Hanoi, Peking and Moscow carried brief reports on the bombing, with no comment whatever.

Meanwhile, United States officials announced increased security measures would be going into effect and more guards would be assigned to American installations. The usual warnings to avoid crowds were issued to the American community.

Similar tightening of guard lines has followed other attacks

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on American installations, such as the bombing of the Hotel Brink here last Christmas Eve, which killed two Americans, and a United States enlisted men's barracks at Qui Nhon February 10 in which 23 died.

But United States quarters in Saigon remained sitting ducks.

Virtually all United States military and civilian establishments are on main streets. While sidewalks can be and are blocked with barbed wire, the streets themselves are open.

The Saigon United Service Organization's club for American servicemen is among the best protected buildings. Its front wall is heavily sandbagged and the door can be entered only by walking through a bunker system.

All windows are heavily taped to impede glass splinters.

Most installations, including the United States military advisory headquarters compound, are walled and surrounded by steel wire fences high enough to fend off grenades.

But the embassy has neither an outer wall nor a fence.

The bombing came as no great surprise. Guards had been previously strengthened in the expectation that raids on North Vietnam might make the embassy a prime target of the Viet Cong.

Among earlier attempts on the embassy was the loaf of bread incident. Somebody concealed a grenade in the loaf and hurled it at the building. But the grenade

was a dud.

Vietnamese police announced ten days ago they had foiled a plot on the embassy with the seizure of 35 pounds of plastic explosives that Communist terrorists had hidden in a Saigon house.

Military Police

Barry Zorthian, embassy spokesman, said that, in addition to Vietnamese police outside and United States marines inside, the embassy will now draw on a recently landed United States Army military police detachment. This detachment is 400 strong.

Zorthian said work will resume on the embassy's upper floors today. The ground floor was the most heavily damaged.

United States and South Vietnamese military men helped in relief work while firemen poured foam on a dozen parked cars set afire by the explosion and ambulances threaded their way among the casualties.

Sgt. Lyle Goodin, 29, of Pekin, Ill., who was walking 50 yards from the embassy, said, "For a few moments, hell and the devil appeared on that street."

"Most Of Them Dead"

Goodin said he saw "about seventeen people, most of them dead" in a Vietnamese restaurant nearby. He carried a wounded woman to the street and then joined Capt. Don Elledge, of Mabank, Texas, and other rescuers in a floor-to-floor check of the embassy casualties.

One woman was carried out with a United States Army jacket thrown across her. At least 30 women had face cuts.

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